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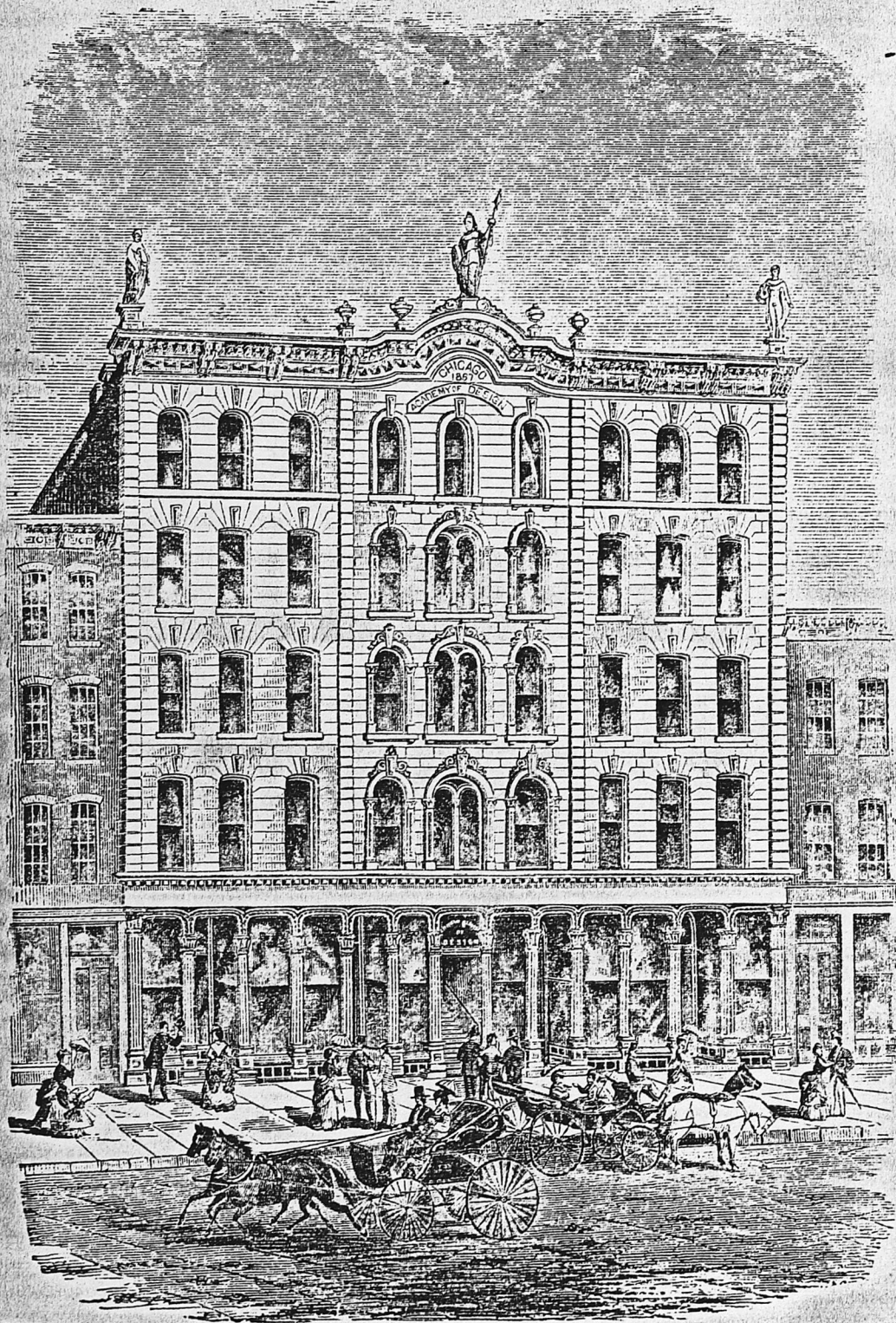
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New Building of the Chicago Academy of Design.

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No. 3.

THE CHICAGO ACADEMY OF DESIGN.

BY GEORGE B. CARPENTER.

THE Ideal is the hint of Heaven God gives to every man. It lures him with a beckoning angel to the very limits of the possible, and then, like an angel-courier, crossing the threshold of the Beyond, it precedes the soul in its out-reaching longings after the unrealized attainable.

Emerging from the barbarous past, the race has been led down through the widening centuries by paths which always end in a Millennium. However pleasant and satisfying the present may be, there is a haunting hope which will let no one rest here, but ever stands, pointing a finger of promise to a better beyond. It is the earth's hope in a Millennium which has given mankind its best history.

Every effort made to realize the Ideal, is a step toward heaven. Each noble endeavor in a man's life, each epoch in a nation's history, each advance the race has made toward civilization, has been but an attempt to express the Ideal. For a deed is but the body in which a thought clothes itself when it appears in action, and an epoch is only the birth of a new national idea.

'Tis the life within that shapes the world without, as the sculptor's ideal shapes his statue. What a man believes, that he becomes. What a nation hopes for, that it strives to realize. It is the effort to attain the Ideal which has brought the race forward to its present attainment, and has milestones the past with so many monuments of greatness. For no man or nation has ever done great things that has not first dreamt them.

The best men the world has seen, and the most civilized nations the race has produced, have been those who were best able to express their best thoughts. These thoughts find their fullest expression in what is called Civilization and Art. For Civilization and Art are both born of the Ideal. Twin-sisters, they have ever been inseparable. Hand in hand have they come down the rugged road along which the march of progress had to be made, strewing blessings like immortal flowers aside the barren way, and always leading the best nation toward the highest end. We cannot speak of the one, without in our thought associating with it, the other.

Both are the best expressions of the best idea of which a nation is capable, and reveal the purest sentiments of a people. For the true Artist is an interpreter. He translates the Beautiful in a language so popular that its pure meaning can be understood by even the untaught eye. When, therefore, we see cities or States giving much attention to the Beautiful, we immediately conclude civilization with them has advanced far along towards its best attainment.

Where the Beautiful is worshiped, there Art rears her temples. But men must see something more in a waterfall than the capacity to provide so much mill-power; and a landscape must suggest higher associations than a pasture-field before Art will consent to abide with us. Hence a prosaic and practical age or people—seeing not the beauty of which these things are the types, but rather the pecuniary profit to be gained from them, or amount of money they represent—is incapable of expressing the Ideal. It is to this fact we wish to call particular attention before proceeding to sketch the history of that enterprise which has grown out of that intense longing of a few followers of the Ideal and worshipers of the Beautiful, to see reared in our city a temple in which Art should find a fitting abiding place, and to which her devotees could resort to study her works.

CHICAGO A PRACTICAL CITY.

If we were obliged to write the past history of Chicago, and do it in a single word, that word would be—Utilitarianism. Chicago has been nothing if not practical. This ruler among cities consented to employ itself with slavish tasks, and found its chief glory in making itself the servant of others. Its giant and kindly energy was harnessed in the traces of a pressing and practical purpose that compelled it to the service of drawing the car of Commerce along the dusty, world-trodden road of business, until—like the captured kings of antiquity who were hitched to the triumphal car of the conqueror—it was not only dragged from its throne, but coerced into a menial position. So long had it employed itself at such dragging duties, that it appeared almost to have forgotten the kingly power to which it was the rightful heir, and by resting satisfied with an easy, though successful present, it showed itself

to be indifferent to a triumphant, if trying future. Thus neglecting its best opportunities, Chicago has often, in the past, sold a permanent glory for a cheap and ephemeral success. This induced a habit of establishing the value of an article by its present practical utility, and not upon the basis of its sterling or intrinsic worth; and thus was created a false standard of taste which was more dazzled by glitter, than delighted by gold.

It was not wonderful, therefore, that for many years artisans should find Chicago a profitable and attractive home, while artists shrank from its poor and comfortless charity as a beggar from a miser's door. Nor was it wonderful that Labor found easy employment; but Art had few patrons. Yet there were a few lovers of the Beautiful who lived and labored with a great hope in their hearts. They knew the time must come when wealth would bring leisure. Then labor would rest from its gain-getting, and the man with the muck-rake looking up, could have time to watch the shepherding winds driving their fleecy flocks across the fenceless fields of light; or to study the bright sky above, with its blue, broken by radiant clouds, until all the broad beauty of the landscape would shape itself into a vision of the Beautiful, which they alone could interpret or realize for him. For this future, these chosen few waited in patience.

BIRTH OF THE ACADEMY.

Yet not idly did they wait, nor with folded hands. They were small in numbers, it is true, but they were large in faith, and so they determined to go forward and make an effort to realize their ideal. And in pursuance of this determination, early in the winter of 1866, the corner-stone of The Chicago Academy of Design was laid in a little organization which met in Reynolds Block and chose for its officers Seldon J. Woodman, President; Charles Peck, Vice-President, and Walter Shirlaw, Secretary.

Recognizing their responsible position as teachers, exponents, and representatives of Art, and appreciating their duty to the public, they shortly afterward opened free schools for drawing from "life" and "antique" models. Through the generosity of Jevne & Almini, who tendered them the use of their gallery for that purpose, the Society was enabled to hold its meetings during the winter without serious inconvenience or interruption.

But early in the spring, having increased its membership to thirty-five, and among that number counting many of the best artists in the city, the members of the Society thought they might venture to make a public demonstration, and ascertain whether there was in the city enough who felt an interest in Art to aid them in their effort to establish a School of Art on a broad and liberal basis. With this purpose in view, during the latter part of April, they issued an invitation, announcing that:

The Chicago Academy of Design will give a literary, musical and dramatic festival at Crosby's Opera House, on Friday evening, May 3, 1867, and on Monday evening, May 13th, will open at its gallery in Jevne & Almini's building, the first semi-annual exhibition of the Academy.

The response which this invitation received from the public conclusively proved two things, viz: That Chicago had some appreciation for miscellaneous entertainments, but scarcely any for an Art Exhibition; for while the Festival at the Opera House was measurably successful, the Art Exhibition given ten days after was a miserable failure. The disheartening effect of this venture, together with the threatened financial failure of the Society, would have been sufficient to discourage any, less determined and devoted than were those enthusiasts who would sacrifice all rather than fail in realizing their ideal. Consequently they still had faith, and notwithstanding their past failures, were inspired by hope, to work and wait.

PERMANENT ORGANIZATION.

In the fall of 1867, the members determined to reorganize on a broader basis, and to this end a meeting was held on the 18th of November, which was largely attended by artists, many of the most prominent in the West for the first time lending their valuable presence, counsel, and assistance to the cause. Among these was Leonard W. Volk, so widely and favorably known, as, by his very presence, to give dignity and character to the organization which selected him as its President.

From the time of that meeting to the present, the Society has gone forward, prospering beyond the expectations of its most sanguine and enthusiastic supporters. Its officers, without wages or recompense, but gladly

and as a labor of love, have contributed their utmost to its success; having established and sustained with credit, since early in January, 1868, the "life," "antique" and "rudimentary" drawing-schools, which for some time were so ably conducted under the direction of Walter Shirlaw, in Room 23 of the Opera House.

But not alone in establishing this school were they successful, but also in projecting and perfecting plans for the financial welfare of the Society, did the officers manifest rare ability and discretion. During the latter part of April, they issued a circular to the public, announcing an "artists' reception, to be given in the Opera House, on Friday evening, March 6th, for the double purpose of raising a sufficient sum to enable the Academy to make accessions of casts in the antique school, and to warrant issuing invitations to the artists of the country, with a view to gathering together in this city a much larger and finer collection of art works for the annual exhibition in December."

This Reception was, under their judicious management, made the "fashionable event of the season." Having thus succeeded in making their Society and its Exhibitions fashionable, they now had nothing more to fear, for the ignorant would not dare, thereafter, to appear so; and those indifferent to Art would feign an interest they could not feel, in order that they might be considered *a la mode*.

Thus the Society prospered, and from the receipts of the Reception—which were over \$1,700—and liberal donations from liberal patrons of Art, all the debts were liquidated, and the Academy, for almost the first time in its history, was relieved from financial embarrassments. The President made a judicious expenditure of a donation of \$500, made by Hon. J. Young Scammon, for the purpose of securing suitable casts for models, directly from the studios in Europe. About fifty valuable works were thus secured to the Academy, and are now in its possession.

Another liberal act of the officers tended more than anything else to popularize the Academy and to prove—what for its success in our utilitarian city it was necessary to show—its absolute utility as an educating influence in this community. A few weeks after the triumph the Academy achieved in its grand Reception, the officers decided upon securing the services of some competent instructor to take full charge of a drawing school, and their choice fell upon Conrad Diehl, than whom no better man could have been selected. He was employed by them at a salary of \$1,000 per annum, and under their liberal provisions for the instruction and comfort of those who should attend the Academy, his school soon numbered thirty-five pupils, who were allowed to study every hour in the day, and any day of the week, for ten dollars a month—the members of the Academy being admitted to all the privileges free.

THE INCORPORATION.

We have not the space to relate in detail the many interesting incidents to be found in the subsequent history of the Academy, and therefore passing over with the merest mention the meeting of the Academy on the 5th of November, 1868, at which President Volk delivered the annual address—pregnant with prophetic utterances regarding its commanding position in the future—and merely pausing to allude to the wonderful success of the Third Annual Exhibition given on the 18th of December—when the entire Opera House was thrown open, and one of the finest collections of paintings exhibited that had ever before been gathered in the West—we will stop only to notice the Act of Incorporation which was secured for the Academy on the 16th of March, 1869. The objects specified in this Act were the "maintenance of schools for the cultivation of the arts of drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, engraving, and design, and the formation of a gallery of objects of art for permanent exhibitions"; and the following artists were included as incorporators:—L. W. Volk, H. C. Ford, Charles Knickerbocker, S. E. Loring, Alvah Bradish, J. C. Cochrane, W. Cogswell, Conrad Diehl, J. F. Gookins, Louis Kurz, R. E. Moore, Theodore Pine, P. Fiske Reed, Walter Shirlaw, G. P. A. Healy, and Charles Peck. Through the active endeavors of several of the friends of the Academy, the Act was so drawn as to forever exempt the personal property of the Society from taxation.

Thus did that ideal which for so long had lured these faithful few forward along a difficult way, now present itself before them as an objective, actual presence. They needed now but courage to proceed one more step to come up with the object they had so long

sought. Circumstances which we need not mention here, urged them on to the taking of this step. The desire which had floated only as a daring dream through their mind, now took body, and shaped itself into a substantial stone structure in which Art could at last find a home for herself, and a temple for her worshippers.

THE ACADEMY BUILDING.

Those who have walked along State Street, below Van Buren, during the past month, must have had their attention attracted to the elegant structure in process of erection on Adams street, just west of State. Fronting eighty feet on Adams street and running back to a depth of seventy-five feet, with its tasty Cleveland brown stone front towering up five full stories, this building has often elicited the admiration of the passer-by, and excited his curious comments.

If on the evening of the 22d of November such an one were in the vicinity of this building, his curiosity must have been still more aroused by the sight of a long line of carriages rolling up before the illuminated entrance, and there depositing their fair burdens. These visions of beauty and fashion flashed for a brief moment in the brilliant space, and then flitted up the passage-way that seemed to lead to a paradise above.

If the curiosity of the looker-on led him to make a still closer inspection, upon advancing to the front of the structure, he would have seen four half finished empty stores; while in the center of the building a broad stairway opened up a wide and easy passage, through which, thronged the gaily dressed visitors. Passing up this shining entrance he would have reached a wide hall by a single flight of stairs, and would there have been ushered, with a great crowd, into a spacious room—33x66—which, as any of those present could have told him, was the Lecture Room of the Academy of Design.

THE STUDIOS.

Those accompanied by ladies must wait until their companions appeared from the adjoining Retiring Room—which is 33x17 feet—but as it is scarcely probable that our curious visitor has prepared himself with such a luxury, he will allow him to continue his investigation—after leaving his coat and hat, and receiving his check for the same—into the secrets and beauties of the building. The first attraction which would offer itself would be Elkin's fine studio, just across the hall, which, with the usual taste and liberality of the occupant, was decorated with flowers, statues and drapery, so as to present a most inviting appearance to all visitors. But being pushed forward by the impatient crowd, he would only have time to observe that studio No. 4, on the right of Elkin's, was fitted up as an office, and while being hurried along the hall he might have time to take a glance into Bradish and Pickering's studios, on the left of the main entrance. This hasty observation would be sufficient to show him that on the first floor of the building were to be found, in addition to the Lecture and Retiring Rooms in the rear, four commodious studios fronting on Adams Street, occupied as follows: No. 1 by A. Bradish; No. 2 by A. Pickering; No. 3 by H. A. Elkins, and No. 4 as an office.

Passing up the broad stairways at either end of the hall, the stream of people was rapidly filling the third floor, and carried thither in the resistless current, the visitor would have found on the Adams street front an arrangement of studios and rooms much the same as below—the artist Schnell occupying Nos. 5 and 6, H. C. Ford No. 8, and Wm. Cogswell No. 9—No. 7 being fitted up as a ladies' parlor.

Resisting the tide which set in toward the Gallery, just across the hall, and successfully combatting the temptation to follow the larger portion of the crowd, our curious visitor might, if he had continued up another flight or two of stairs, have found the fourth and fifth stories occupied exclusively by artists, whose studios, like all those below, were appropriately decorated and illuminated for the festive occasion. On the fourth floor, fronting on Adams street, is found, in studio No. 10, J. H. Drury, the newly-appointed Professor of Drawing and Painting; in No. 11, Frank M. Pebbles; No. 12, J. S. Reed; No. 13, Albert Jenks, while No. 14 is the commodious studio occupied by the old and popular Teacher of the Academy, and the present Professor of the Life and Antique School—Conrad Diehl.

The fifth floor is occupied by F. L. Rockwell—who has studios Nos. 15 and 16—J. F. Froendle and Paul Brown—the last named gentleman occupying the studios Nos. 18 and 19, respectively.

THE GALLERY.

Having thus taken a hasty glance at the surroundings and general interior arrangements of the building, the visitor is now prepared to return to the third floor, where is located the large and richly furnished Gallery, which, crowded with pictures and people, is the great center of attraction for all on this evening of the 22d of November—the long-anticipated opening evening of The Chicago Academy of Design. Let us pass down the stairs and retrace our way to the Gallery.

Here we are with the wide doors widely opened—the warm light pouring through, and—

But hold! Can you enter until you have first paused to admire that beautiful scene?

It is a picture itself—such an one as only the Great Artist himself could create—He whose colors melt through clouds in rainbow tints; whose silent sunshine sifts through rustling leaves upon the lowing line they scarcely shade; whose waters splash, like light 'gainst rippled clouds, upon a broken beach, and who in giving life and action to each portrait that He paints, glorifies every face with some feature of His own transfigured countenance. It was a grand picture we looked upon—for it was a picture with a soul in it. The mere presence of the human soul gives dignity to the meanest surroundings; but when that soul is seen expressing its most ennobling sentiments through features aflame with enthusiasm, and amid surroundings that provoke to poetry even the most obdurately practical, then the scene is one that must transcend the successful portrayal of even the most graphic pen-painter.

Who, then, shall attempt to describe the great picture of the evening—the one that framed itself in the wide doorway as the eye glanced through upon the brilliant beauties, attended by gay gallants, with the perspective of pictures stretching away down the walls, while the soft sounds of music flooded the air like vocal sunshine. Let some bolder hand than ours endeavor to paint the scene. We pause before it only that the eye may hang on memory's walls this gem of the evening's exhibition. If any went away without doing so, we pity them, for they saw nothing if they neglected to notice and study this view of what art can never perfectly produce—animated nature.

But these "animated paintings" received sufficient admiration, during the course of the evening, from those who were, perhaps, better able to judge of their beauties than those of the canvas; so we will leave to such a closer examination of these walking portraits, and turn our attention to the still paintings on the wall.

THE EXHIBITION.

We cannot, in our limited space, hope to give a detailed criticism of the many pictures exhibited on this occasion, and therefore prefer to speak in general terms of the Exhibition itself. And we regret the necessity we feel of making our first remark a fault-finding one; but duty to our idea of artistic grouping and harmonious arrangement, compels us to notice the awkward way in which some of the pictures were hung. Perhaps, however, this was not so much the fault of the Hanging Committee as of the material at their disposal. Such an unwieldy canvas as Healey's 'Peacemakers' is a very awkward thing to dispose of or handle, and we trust that the Committee will discover their error in time to prevent the recurrence of such a blemish at their next Annual Exhibition.

After noticing the general appearance of the Gallery, we may find opportunity, notwithstanding the fashionable crush, to catch a glimpse of David Neal's two magnificent architectural paintings—Interior of St. Marks, Venice, and Westminster Abbey—which, through the kindness of Bierstadt, are allowed to appear at this Exhibition. But of the perfect drawing, the perfection of the light and shade effects which so distinguish these superb works of art, we have not space to speak.

Of Wm. Hart's, The Golden Hour, we venture one criticism, which is, that if he had given us a little less of the "ochre and green" effect and more of that soft, luminous golden atmosphere which he has thrown over so many other of his canvases, we should find the picture by which he is represented in the gallery more pleasing. It is, however, a fine work, and worthy the distinguished painter.

T. S. Noble, of The Slave Mart and John Brown fame, and present Instructor in the McMicken School of Art, Cincinnati, is represented by his Witch Hill, which has all the excellence and not a few of the defects of this somewhat daring artist. The handling of the subject is bold and strong, and the grouping very effective,

and the coloring is not so bad as we have seen in some other of his paintings.

Of Mr. Fairman's landscapes and marine, we do not care to speak, as it seems to us that the artist has accomplished more with his brush than Nature could hope to do, or we hope to describe, but we should like to take space to notice at length DeHaas' dramatic marine, After the Storm; Church's bit of oriental landscape and ruins; Heade's quiet marine, Point Judith—which, although thrown into a dark corner, is one of the gems of the Exhibition; Casilear's landscape; Guy's remarkable portrait of the lamented Elliott; Le Clear's excellent portrait; Kensett's landscape, with its wonderful atmosphere, perspective, and sky; the landscapes by James Hart, and the Smillies; the charming little genre by Reinhar' and several other notable features of the Exhibition. But we must forbear.

The Home Artists—except the portrait—were poorly represented, owing, we understand, to the demand upon their time to fill orders taken during the summer. If this be the true cause, we congratulate them and condole with the Academy. Bigelow, Elkins, Ford, Reed, and Drury were about the only ones who made any display, which, as a whole, was hardly up to their rising reputation. The portrait painters, however, came out strong, and hung their canvases so thick that turn which way we might, we there found the walls making faces at us. Phillips was wonderfully successful in his drapery—that garnet dress in one of his portraits shining with a real luster, and standing forth from the canvas as if it might rustle, should the picture be moved. Cogswell, Gollmann, Pickering, Pine, Pebbles, Schwabert, and the many other portrait painters of our city were also largely represented by fair specimens. Earle was represented by a field scene,—"Watching the Storm," and a game piece; Holst, our promising marine painter, exhibits but a single specimen; "Billy" Baird is represented by an excellently well drawn character-sketch of Parisians reading the war proclamation; Verbeck exhibits his fine large steel-plate engraving of "Morning in the Valley"; and Beale shows a variety of water-color scenes from Shakespeare.

PRESENT ORGANIZATION.

But having studied the pictures as well as the crowd would permit us to do, and being—shall we say satisfied or dissatisfied?—we next endeavored to make ourselves acquainted with the present organization and condition of the Academy, and its future plan of operation. This information was kindly furnished us by the gentlemanly Recording Secretary, Mr. Charles Knickerbocker, and other officers, to whom we here extend our thanks. We found that the officers elected for the ensuing year were as follows:

President—Leonard W. Volk.
Vice-President—Henry C. Ford.
Corresponding Secretary—P. Fiske Reed.
Recording Secretary—Charles Knickerbocker.
Treasurer—Belden F. Culver.
Council—Theodore Pine, Conrad Diehl, Jo. J. Phillips, Charles Peck, Alvah Bradish, William Cogswell, John H. Drury, Rufus E. Moore.

The present membership of the Academy is divided as follows: Academicians, 38; Honorary Academicians, 5; Associates, 33; Fellow members, 26—Total, 102.

THE SCHOOLS.

The schools of the Academy are now fully organized, with Conrad Diehl, Professor of the Life and Antique, and John H. Drury, Professor of Drawing and Painting. While it is the intention of the officers to offer every advantage to all who desire to study Art as a profession, they have not yet been able, owing to other pressing duties, to mature a plan which will be final and complete. For the present, Mr. Diehl will take the class that study from Life and Models, and Mr. Drury the Drawing and Painting class. Both of these will be divided into two branches, which will be taught on alternate days. Drawing and Coloring, although any student will have the privilege of working every day. The tuition fee will be \$2.00 per month for Rudimentary classes, and \$3.00 for Coloring. The Antique School is amply supplied with casts, among them those already mentioned as having been selected by Mr. Volk, in Rome, and presented to the Academy by Mr. Scammon.

The future of the Academy is what its members choose to make it. If they rest content with what they have already accomplished—which, however much it may appear to be to them, we look upon as but a beginning—we shall have to write the word "failure" on that tombstone which will mark their grave. But if inspired by past success, they will rise up and gird themselves anew for a fresh endeavor, and with a spirit of true devotion continue to worship that Ideal which has led them thus far along, they will yet attain to that height where—removed from the distracting elements which lure and mar their beauty—Art will reveal herself in all her perfection, and in all her beautiful proportions.